



## LOS ANGELES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT Code of Ethics

*Adopted: 9/1998; Revised: 12/2000, 2/2003, 5/2026*

### Preamble

At the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD), our mission is *to ensure that all our students graduate READY FOR THE WORLD*. Our success depends on our teamwork, trust and commitment. Our Code of Ethics is intended to help us achieve success by setting common expectations and increasing trust, commitment and teamwork within LAUSD, and between LAUSD and the community. To help us achieve our mission, we are committed to three core ethical principles:

- Commitment to Excellence
- District and Personal Integrity
- Responsibility

Our goal is to create a culture that fosters trust, commitment to excellence and responsibility, personal and institutional integrity, and avoids conflicts of interest and appearances of impropriety in LAUSD decision-making.

### 1. Application and Enforceability

The Code of Ethics applies to all LAUSD personnel including Board Members, collectively referred to in the Code of Ethics as “LAUSD Officials.” Provisions of this Code of Ethics are supported by State law, and LAUSD Board and Personnel Commission Rules, regulations, bulletins and collective bargaining agreements. Violations of this Code of Ethics may result in administrative or disciplinary action under those laws, rules, regulations, bulletins and agreements.

### 2. Making Ethical Decisions

While the Code of Ethics provides general guidance, it does not provide a complete listing or a definitive answer to every possible ethical situation. When making decisions, we should use good judgment to fulfill the spirit as well as the letter of the Code of Ethics. When making decisions:

- Evaluate the situation and identify the ethical issues.
- Follow the rules. Consult the Code of Ethics, laws, regulations and LAUSD bulletins, policies and procedures, and apply them to the situation.
- Ask for guidance from your supervisor. If your supervisor is involved in the problem, contact his or her supervisor, or the Ethics Office for help. Ask for help early—before you act.
- Make and carry out a decision that is consistent with the rules and develops excellence, integrity and responsibility.

### 3. Contacting the Ethics Office

For advice, help, training, or more information on LAUSD’s ethics program visit our website or contact us directly.

#### LAUSD Ethics Office

333 S. Beaudry Ave., 18th Floor  
 Los Angeles, CA 90017  
 T: 213-241-3330  
 F: 213-241-3319

<https://www.lausd.org/ethics>

AskEthics@lausd.net

#### **4. Commitments and Expectations**

To achieve our mission of educating students, we strive to create a culture that fosters trust and focuses on excellence. Our goal is to develop a culture that is personally fulfilling, supports ethical decision-making, and provides an environment where hard work, creativity and innovation are the norm. To succeed, we must have the same expectations and vision about how we will practice our commitment to the Code of Ethics in our everyday work.

#### **5. Building Workplace Excellence**

We are committed to being the best school district and personnel we can be, educating our students to their maximum potential. Everything we do has an impact on the classroom.

- A. *Set the Example* – We are committed to providing the best example we can, striving to demonstrate excellence, integrity and responsibility in our work.
- B. *Create an Environment of Trust, Respect and Non-Discrimination* – We are committed to creating an environment of trust, care and respect. We will not tolerate discriminatory or harassing behavior of students or colleagues.
- C. *Provide Honest, Accurate and Timely Information* – We are committed to candor in our work relationships, providing other LAUSD personnel including supervisors, senior staff and Board Members with accurate, reliable and timely information. We will not tolerate falsification or cheating.
- D. *Identify Problems and Help Create Solutions* – We are committed to identifying areas for improvement within LAUSD, and suggesting and implementing solutions that make us more successful.

#### **6. Business Integrity**

As stewards of public tax dollars, it is the responsibility of every LAUSD Official to ensure that LAUSD decision-making is conducted free from bias and influence. LAUSD Officials are committed to conducting business in a manner that enhances public trust and confidence in the integrity of LAUSD's decision-making processes.

- A. *Objectivity* – LAUSD Officials should make decisions based solely on objective criteria and free from outside influence, making contract award recommendations in the best interest of LAUSD. LAUSD Officials that have an actual or appearance of a conflict of interest should immediately recuse themselves from the decision-making process and notify their LAUSD supervisor, the Procurement Services Division or Ethics Office of their actual or potential conflict.
- B. *Cone of Silence* – In accordance with LAUSD's Contractor Code of Conduct, from the time an RFP, specification or other contract document is announced until the staff recommendation is made public (the contract's board report is published by the Executive Officer of the Board of Education), LAUSD Officials will not have contact concerning the contract with contractors participating in the process or their representatives. Further, LAUSD Officials outside of the contracting process shall not seek information from our attempt to influence other LAUSD Officials managing the contracting process during the Cone of Silence.
- C. *Confidentiality in Contracting* – To reinforce public trust and confidence in our procurement processes, we are committed to ensuring that procurement information is kept confidential, used only in the performance of our duties, and not released early to potential contractors.
- D. *Relationships with Contractors or Partners* – We are committed to reporting gross mismanagement, significant waste of funds, abuse of authority, threats to safety, violations of our Contractor Code of Conduct, laws, rules, regulations, bulletins, policies and procedures, or other conduct that damages our integrity or reputation, to our supervisor, the Ethics Office or the Office of the Inspector General.
- E. *Lobbying Disclosure* – Prior to scheduling meetings with an outside organization/individual, LAUSD Officials should refer the organization/individual to the Ethics Office to determine if the organization/individual is or should

register with LAUSD's Lobbying Disclosure Program. The registration of lobbyists and the disclosure of their activities promotes transparency in LAUSD decision-making, fostering the public's trust and confidence in LAUSD.

## **7. Conflicting Interests**

To maintain our integrity, we are committed to making decisions in the best interests of LAUSD. We will avoid conflicts of interest and the appearance of impropriety, understanding that public perception of our actions is just as important as the actions themselves. Even lawful or well-intended actions may undermine public trust if they create an appearance of favoritism, bias, or impropriety.

- A. *Financial Conflicts of Interest* – A conflict of interest can exist anytime our position or decisions provide us a personal financial benefit or improper advantage. We will not make decisions or use our position for personal benefit or to gain an improper advantage.
- B. *Appearance of Impropriety* – LAUSD Officials must conduct themselves in a manner that promotes public trust and confidence in the impartiality and integrity of LAUSD. LAUSD Officials will avoid any actions, relationships, or decisions that could reasonably be perceived by a member of the public as improper, unethical, or self-serving.
- C. *Disclosure and Disqualification* – It is the responsibility of an LAUSD Official to promptly disclose in writing to their LAUSD supervisor or the Ethics Office any actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest in their LAUSD decision-making as soon as they become aware of it. Further, the LAUSD Official should remove themselves from the decision-making process until receiving guidance from the Ethics Office or the Office of the General Counsel.
- D. *Improper Influence* – We are committed to abstaining from decisions that could result in a direct benefit to a close relative or co-habitant including, but not limited to, hiring, promotion, discipline, evaluation or direct supervisor.

## **8. Employment Concerns**

To ensure that all LAUSD Officials maintain the highest standards of integrity, impartiality, and accountability, outside employment or activities that could impact their official duties are prohibited.

- A. *Outside Employment or Activities* – We are permitted to receive outside income or participate in uncompensated activities as long as they do not create a conflict with our LAUSD work. We are committed to declining outside income or uncompensated activities that might be perceived as inconsistent, incompatible or in conflict with our official duties. Before accepting outside employment or uncompensated activity, in accordance with LAUSD policy, a LAUSD Official must disclose in writing and receive approval from their LAUSD supervisor.
- B. *LAUSD Affiliation* – LAUSD Officials may not use their official LAUSD title or affiliation to promote personal outside employment or activities, whether or not compensation is received. LAUSD Officials should ensure that any messaging related to their outside employment or activities does not include any express or implied endorsements related to LAUSD.
- C. *Post LAUSD Employment* – In order to prevent conflicts of interest, LAUSD Officials are not permitted to discuss the possibility of future employment with a person or organization that might benefit from their official decisions. In accordance with LAUSD's Contractor Code of Conduct, Contractors are required to disclose all personnel, consultants and sub-contractors who were LAUSD Officials in the previous three years. LAUSD will not contract with a contractor who compensates a former LAUSD Official to influence an action on a matter pending with LAUSD if that employee, within the last twelve (12) months, held a LAUSD position in which the employee personally and substantially participated in that matter. LAUSD will not contract with a contractor that employs a former LAUSD Official who, while serving in a LAUSD position within the last two years, substantially participated in the development of the contract's RFP, requirements, specifications or in any other part of the contracting process. No former LAUSD Official is permitted to lobby LAUSD for one year after leaving LAUSD. We are committed to avoiding discussions about future employment with people or organizations who can

benefit from our decisions, and will not take or influence official actions that might benefit that person or organization.

- D. *Uphold LAUSD Interests* – We are committed to hiring and promoting LAUSD personnel based on their qualifications and the job-criteria of the position and will not tolerate improper practices.

### **9. Gifts and Travel**

LAUSD Officials shall not accept gifts, travel, or other items of value that could influence—or appear to influence—their official duties, or that could create a conflict of interest or the appearance of impropriety in their decision-making.

- A. *Observe Gift Limits* – A gift is a benefit we receive for which we did not pay. Gifts can include merchandise, food, tickets, use of facilities, investments, rebates or discounts not offered to the public, or forgiveness of debt from vendors, lobbyists, parents, students or others. We will not accept gifts or gratuities in excess of the State of California’s gift limit from a single source in a single year (aggregate retail value) or that give the appearance that the gift improperly influenced our decisions regardless of the amount. We will not solicit vendors, lobbyists, parents or others for anything that provides us a personal benefit different from the public.
- B. *Gifts from Contractors* – For LAUSD Officials in the Procurement Services Division, there is zero-tolerance for gifts from LAUSD vendors. This prohibition is extended to gifts or travel payments from contractors to LAUSD Officials participating in a contracting process under the Cone of Silence.

### **10. Proper Use of Resources**

LAUSD Officials are entrusted with public resources and must use them responsibly and lawfully. The misuse or unauthorized use of public resources is strictly prohibited.

- A. *Public Resources* – Except for occasional and limited personal use that does not interfere with performance of duties or create an appearance of impropriety, we are committed to ensuring that LAUSD facilities, equipment, supplies, mailing lists or other LAUSD resources are used for LAUSD purposes only. Except for occasional and limited personal use, we will not tolerate improper use of public resources, and will report and reimburse LAUSD for significant costs of any limited personal use.
- B. *LAUSD Time* – We are committed to ensuring that LAUSD Officials are tasked to perform only LAUSD work on LAUSD working-time. We will not direct or permit LAUSD Officials to perform personal services on LAUSD working time and will report such incidents to a LAUSD supervisor, Ethics Office or Office of the Inspector General.
- C. *Public Position* – We are committed to ensuring that our power and authority are used in an appropriate, positive manner that enhances the public interest and trust. We will not use our authority to improperly influence people or obtain preferential treatment.
- D. *Confidentiality* – To achieve excellence, LAUSD Officials, parents and students must be able to discuss issues frankly, and when appropriate, in confidence. We are committed to abiding by all laws and LAUSD policies concerning confidential information, including student records, personnel files, agreements, and District records and policies. We will not reveal confidential information, including meeting content and the sources of comments, from staff, faculty, parents and closed Board of Education meetings.

### **11. Reporting Responsibilities and Waivers**

LAUSD Officials have an ethical obligation to report known or suspected violations of the law, regulations, policies, or ethical standards, including fraud, waste, abuse, or other misconduct. Prompt and honest reporting is essential to maintaining public trust and ensuring the integrity of LAUSD.

- A. *Relationships with Students* – We are committed to ensuring that LAUSD Official-student relationships are positive, professional and non-exploitative. We will not tolerate improper LAUSD Official-student relationships.

- B. *Improper Conduct* – When someone does well, it reflects well on all of us. When we make a mistake, we strive to correct it and learn from it. We are committed to reporting gross mismanagement, significant waste of funds, abuse of authority, threats to safety, violations of our Code of Ethics, laws, rules, regulations, bulletins, policies and procedures, or other conduct that damages our integrity or reputation, to our LAUSD supervisor, the Ethics Office or Office of the Inspector General.
- C. *Retaliation* – We are committed to creating a work environment where problems can be reported and solved. We are prohibited from threatening, harassing, punishing or retaliating against LAUSD Officials who make good faith complaints.
- D. *Waivers* – The LAUSD General Superintendent or his/her designee upon a showing of good cause may waive an ethics prohibition in writing with notification to the Board of Education.